

**Small Group Ministry Session**

*Home, How Habitat Made Us Human*

Submitted by Diane Haines, UU Fellowship of La Crosse, Wisconsin, September 20, 2017

**Opening Words:**

"Home is the one place in all this world where hearts are sure of each other. It is the place of confidence. It is the place where we tear off that mask of guarded and suspicious coldness which the world forces us to wear in self-defense, and where we pour out the unreserved communications of full and confiding hearts. It is the spot where expressions of tenderness gush out without any sensation of awkwardness and without any dread of ridicule."

- Frederick W. Robertson

**Joys and Concerns:** Share a bit of yourself, a thought, an event in your life, or something intended to be meaningful to these friends with whom we gather again. Please respect the confidentiality of what is shared within this bonded group.

**Focus:**

Excerpts from *Home, How Habitat Made Us Human* by John S. Allen

Home is where the heart is. This may seem self-explanatory, but none of our close primate cousins have anything like homes. The fact that *Homo sapiens* create homes is one of the greatest puzzles of our evolution.

Home sheds light on the deep pleasures we receive from our homes, rooting them in both our evolution and our identity as humans. Home is not simply where the heart is, but the mind, too.

Describing humans as homebodies is somewhat misleading: we are more home-minded. Home is not simply a location on the landscape; it has a privileged place in our cognition. Home brings on feelings of comfort, security, and control.

Feeling at home may be a matter of feeling settled, comfortable, and secure. Looking at it in the opposite way, that feeling settled and comfortable in any setting is simply making oneself at home.

Please respond to whichever question or questions you feel moved to answer. You might also respond to any of the Focus material.

1. What does "home" mean to you? Is it a place or places, present or past? Perhaps the experience and meaning of home is more connected with persons than with place.
2. Is "home" a state of mind, a place you can access anywhere you are, even in solitude?
3. Has the meaning, the actuality, or experience of "home" changed for you over time? If so, how?
4. In our society getting ahead professionally often means getting on the road. How did you and/or your children navigate through disruptions in the home environment?
5. How many physical homes have you lived in? How did you make these dwelling home-like?

**Closing Words:**

"The ache for home lives in all of us. The safe place where we can go as we are and not be questioned."

— Maya Angelou, *All God's Children Need Traveling Shoes*